



## Flathead City-County Health Department

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www.flatheadhealth.org

### SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 6  
Community Health Services  
751-8110 FAX 751-8111  
Date: 3-18-11  
Environmental Health Services  
Bill No. HB 2  
Reproductive Health Services  
751-8130 FAX 751-8131  
751-8150 FAX 751-8151  
Home Health Services  
751-6800 FAX 751-6807  
WIC Services  
751-8170 FAX 751-8171  
Animal Shelter  
752-1310 FAX 752-1546

March 17, 2011

Senator Dave Lewis, Chair  
Senate Finance and Claims Committee  
Montana State Senate  
Capital Station  
Helena, MT 59620

Re: HB 2

Dear Chairman Lewis,

As your committee considers House Bill 2, I feel compelled to respond to some of the public health program cuts adopted in the House and forwarded on to you for consideration. During your deliberations please keep the following in mind:

#### **Laboratory Services Bureau (Public Health Laboratory)**

I have had the opportunity to work on several national-level initiatives regarding foodborne outbreak response. On all of these projects I have worked with the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL). The APHL highly regards the Montana Public Health Laboratory. It is a well-equipped laboratory with very good laboratorians. Our Public Health Laboratory is capable high level laboratory testing that may result in rapid identification of foodborne pathogens that may result in the decrease of morbidity and mortality associated with a foodborne illness outbreaks. Our Public Health Laboratory is capable of identifying agents that may be associated with biological and chemical terrorism. With the food security issues that continue to increase throughout the United States and all the agriculture activity in our State we may lack the capacity to respond appropriately in an event involving the security of our food supply.

Please restore the funding to the Public Health Laboratory. Rapid identification of agents that cause disease reduces illness and saves lives.

#### **Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP)**

MTUPP provides funding to Flathead County as well as 49 other counties to support community-oriented prevention activities. We have historically have used less than 50% of the funding to staff a health department position and used the remainder to fund school-based and other community-based activities.

The Tobacco Use Prevention Program is making a difference in the State. Over the past ten year we have observed significant reductions in tobacco use in Montana - 23.2% among adults and 46% among our youth. Tobacco-related illness results in over \$277 million in excess medical costs annually in Montana. The cost to our Medicaid program is \$67 million annually.

There is talk out there that the rates of reduction of tobacco use have leveled off and that the program can be curtailed. Over the past few years the rates of reduction have slowed slightly but use rates are still going down. This is to be expected in any intervention strategy. The famous Italian philosopher Pareto clearly demonstrates this concept with application of his 80 – 20 rule exhibited by the Pareto Curve. Taking away the intervention strategies will clearly result in increased tobacco use. Please don't let this happen, restore funding for MTUPP.

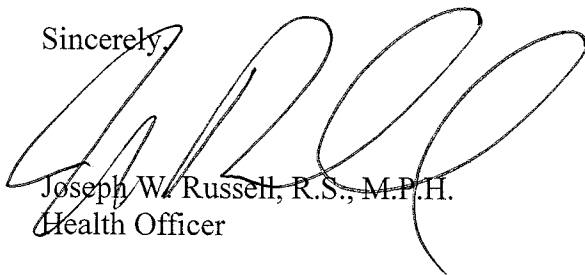
### **Title X Family Planning**

The Flathead City-County Health Department operates a Title X Family Planning Clinic and has done so for the past 40 years. The Title X program is designed to provide access to contraceptive services, supplies and information to all who want and need them. By law, priority is given to persons from low-income families and we operate in strict compliance with Title X policies.

Clinical Services are a large component of our Title X program as many women in Flathead County consider our clinic their medical home. Services are charged to patients on a sliding fee scale and the grant associated with the Title X program covers our operating expenses that patients are not capable of covering. Operating this program within the Health Department allows the integration of related services throughout our public health system. Programs such as sexually transmitted disease surveillance, investigation and control, our novel sharps control program operated in conjunction with Flathead County Solid Waste, and the Ryan White (HIV/AIDS) case management programs operate more effectively as a result of our Title X program. We urge you to support the funding of Title X Family Planning Clinics and not reject the funds available to Montana to support these essential services.

Every dollar invested in a Title X program saves four dollars. That's a great return on investment. Please continue the support of the Title X program.

Sincerely,



Joseph W. Russell, R.S., M.P.H.  
Health Officer